

Misconstrued

By CHARLES H. CHAMBERLIN

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John Carroll sat tipped back in his office chair, his feet perched comfortably on the desk in front of him. The click, click of a typewriter, mingled with the murmur of voices, came to him indistinctly through the closed door, the curtain of which was drawn—signal to his office force that he was busy and must on no account be disturbed.

Leaning over, Carroll took a letter from the desk and carefully reread it. It ran as follows:

"London, England.

"Dear Mr. Carroll—Mother is writing to friends at home and has asked me to let you know that we are sailing for New York Wednesday (today's Monday) on the Brightland. It is a slow boat and brings us to port a week from Saturday. Please come and meet us. We shall be utterly helpless in that roar and bustle after the two years spent in this slow going hemisphere.

"I wonder if mother's 'legal adviser' has changed and if we will recognize him at the pier. As for me, foreign capitals have added three inches to my height besides the dignity of a presentation at court. Until the coming Saturday, faithfully,

"MARGARET CLEARWATER."

That signature meant so much and so little.

Another letter in finer hand read:

"Dear John—Margaret is writing for your help on our arrival, but I need your help right away. A young fellow from Pittsburgh named Richards met Margaret at a country house in Devonshire six months ago and has been devoted to her ever since. How devoted I did not dream until she told me yesterday that he had proposed. In spite of my protests because of their youth Margaret has promised him an answer in two months. For the last year I have been trying to persuade her to accept an Englishman who has a tidy brewing business in Yorkshire and who has been her constant shadow, but she says she will marry an American or die a bachelor girl.

"Now, John, please look this fellow up financially. I am not yet persuaded that he is not after Margaret's money. And when we get home, do use your influence with her to postpone the whole business until she comes of age.

"How good it will seem to be within easy reach of your sound advice once more. Sincerely,

"WILLIAM CLEARWATER."

Two great letters, both from college, where by had made a name for himself as a crack guard and sports car, Carroll had joined Stephen Clearwater as his private secretary. For five years he and Margaret, Clearwater's only child, had been very good chums. She always levied her tribute of candy on him whenever he appeared at her house and usually managed to accompany him on his drives when overseeing her father's real estate interests.

Then he had started his own business, she had gone away to school, and they had not met until her home coming for her father's funeral, shortly after which she and her mother had sailed for Europe. As Carroll reviewed his life for the past ten years he acknowledged to himself that he could not tell just when it was that he had fallen in love with Margaret. Certain it was she had never discovered his affection, much less reciprocated it. He had let her go to Europe without making any sign, thinking that there would be plenty of time after her return. And now she was returning practically engaged to another man, and the castles he had been building for the past two years had suddenly tumbled about his ears.

It flashed upon him that her ship was due in a couple of days and that it devolved upon him to look up this young Richards in the meantime.

Saturday found Carroll at the pier. Emerging from the throng of passengers, Mrs. Clearwater greeted him with the warmth and affection of a mother. Margaret offered her hand in a formal way and turned to bid adieu to acquaintances of the voyage. Customs officials dispensed with Carroll saw the mother and daughter safely ensconced in a cab and left them to rejoin Mrs. Clearwater at their hotel after dinner.

"Well, John," Mrs. Clearwater said as he entered the room that night, "I've sent Margaret off to her room so we can have a talk alone. You can see her later, but I must retire early and sleep off the rolling of the ship. First I want to know what you learned about young Richards. He's all right socially, but I'm not perfectly sure he's not after Margaret's money."

"I've made inquiries among my friends," replied Carroll in a dry voice, "and his family fortunes considerably more than double Margaret's inheritance."

Mrs. Clearwater smiled. "Truthfully, John, I don't believe the girl really loves him, though when I try to talk her out of her determination to give him a final answer in two months she insists she will accept him. The idea that you were to be consulted made her furious."

"I feel she is wholly right about it," Mrs. Clearwater interrupted Carroll. "She knows she is responsible to you alone, and I am sure that whatever I might say would not only fail to convince but would sacrifice her friendship, a thing which I am very anxious to retain."

Margaret's entrance cut short further conversation. Mrs. Clearwater excused

herself, and Carroll found himself alone with the girl.

"Margaret, your mother has asked me to perform a very difficult task," he began, "but—"

She looked up at him, and there was steel in her eyes.

"I have declined her request. Instead I must tell you what has been in my heart for a long time. I love you, Margaret; have loved you—for how many years I do not know."

She did not draw back, but opened her big blue eyes with a little twinkle, and waited for him to go on.

"When your mother wrote me of your intended engagement I first realized the height and breadth of my passion for you, and ever since I have been wondering how I shall do without you. I suppose I shall manage it somehow, but I could not keep silent. It was asking too much of my heart, and so I have told you not all, but a small part of my story. I hope—"

What he hoped was not told, for the next moment, with a girl in his arms, he was transported to a paradise he had not dreamed of.

Some time afterward, when articulate speech had returned to John, a voice from his shoulder asked:

"John, dear, how long have you loved me?"

"You remember the day your father died and you came to me and said that I would have to take care of you in future? I realized then that I wanted to take care of you—in a different way. And now, Miss Hardheart, how long have you loved me without giving any sign?"

"Stupid!" she replied, with a gleam of mischief in her eye. "When I told you that you would have to take care of me I meant it in the way you thought I didn't mean it."

Caprices of Disraeli.

In one of his books of biographical reminiscences Augustus J. C. Hare gives the following illustration of the caprices of Disraeli:

One day while dining out a lady offered him the mustard.

"I never take mustard," replied the statesman in his sepulchral voice.

"Oh, don't you?" replied the lady.

"No," continued "Dizzy" in his most solemn tones. "There are three things I have never used. I have never touched mustard, I have never had a watch, and I have never made use of an umbrella."

"Well," replied the lady, "I can understand the mustard—that is a mere matter of taste—but surely going without the other things must have been sometimes rather inconvenient?"

"And why should I want them?" continued Disraeli. "I live under the shadow of Big Ben, and there is a clock in every room of the house of commons, so that I cannot possibly require a watch, and as I always go about in a clouded carriage I can never want an umbrella."

His Own Story.

Styler applied his hands to his forehead and had to walk with a crutch. He came limping up the street toward his home the other evening and laboriously mounted the front steps. His wife watched him. Once inside the house Styler hung the crutch on the hall rack and stepped briskly toward the dining room.

"I'm sure I can't see why you still carry that thing," remarked Mrs. Styler. "It was all very well when your ankle was bad. But it is as sound as ever now. You don't look at all pretty hobbling along on a crutch, I assure you."

"Perhaps not," assented Styler, "but I'm getting even with myself for years of self sacrifice. You don't know what strap hanging is. For years I have given up my seat to women. Now the moment I poke my nose inside the door of a car they fall over one another in offering their seats to me. The dear girls can't help it. I'm going to hang on to that crutch, my love, until I am thoroughly rested up."—New York Press.

Concerning Livery Rigs.

Why is it that you can always tell a livery rig when you see it? Two women were discussing this question recently. "Well, in the first place," said one, "it isn't as smart as the private rig. If it has a coachman, he isn't dressed in clean, new looking clothes. The harness has no bright mountings, and, as a rule, the horses look half tired out. If it is an open buggy or a two seated rig, the people in it help to show that it is rented. Their faces and actions always indicate that they are buying a pleasure. People who own their own rigs ride in them more as a matter of course. A rented rig always has 'livery' written all over it to me." "Those are probably the correct reasons," replied the other. "But whether they are or not I know I can always tell a livery rig when I see it just as I can always spot a bride and bridegroom when I see them on the street."—Kansas City Times.

Are You Nervous?

The man or woman suffering from nervousness should seek the companionship of healthy persons free from nervousness. The meals ought to be eaten very slowly. All ordinary hygienic rules are to be obeyed. Will exercises are good. The nervous person must, to use a figure of speech, spring out of the warm, nervous bed and plunge into the cold bath of effort. The thing he dreads doing is the very one he should do. One excellent plan for nervous men and women is to attend a good theater and watch the demeanor of some self possessed actor or actress. Let them study that demeanor and try to imitate it. It will be something for them to do when attacked by a nervous spell. It will be found better than buttoning or unbuttoning gloves or indulging in any other of the purposeless acts so common to the nervous.

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Residence of F. B. Pilch, 78 Watkinson Avenue.

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The carbons are not heated equally, the upper or positive one being much the hotter. A small cup shaped cavity or "crater," ordinarily less than an eighth of an inch in diameter, is formed in its end, the glowing concave surface of which emits the greater part of the total light. In lights of the usual size, something like half a horsepower of energy is concentrated in this little crater, and its temperature is limited only by the vaporization of the carbon. Carbon being the most refractory substance known, the temperature of the crater is the highest yet produced artificially and ranks next to that of the sun. It is fortunate that nature has provided us with such a substance as carbon, combining, as it does, the highest resistance to heat with the necessary electrical conductivity. Without carbon or an equivalent—and none is known—we could have no arc light.—Charles F. Brush in Atlantic.

STOP IT.

Boasting of what you can do instead of doing it.

Thinking that life is a grind and not worth living.

Exaggerating and making mountains out of molehills.

Talking continually about yourself and your affairs.

Saying unkind things about acquaintances and friends.

Thinking that all the good chances and opportunities are gone by.

Thinking of yourself to the exclusion of everything and every one else.

Speculating as to what you would do in some one else's place and do your best in your own.

Gazing idly into the future and dreaming about it instead of making the most of the present.

Longing for the good things that others have instead of going to work and earning them for yourself.—Success.

A Hurricane.

The terrors of the deep were perhaps never more thrillingly set forth than in the description by a young lady who last year made her first trip abroad. She kept a diary, very much, like that of Mark Twain, when for seven days he recorded the fact that he "got up, washed and went to breakfast."

There was one important exception. When she crossed the channel the experience was so trying that she felt impelled to describe it.

"I firmly resolved to stay on deck," she wrote, "although the tempest increased to such a frightful hurricane that it was only with the greatest difficulty that I could hold up my parasol."

A Wonderful Memory.

Hortensius, the Roman orator, could repeat word for word a book he had just read. On one occasion he made a wager with one Stenna and to win it went to an auction, remained all day and in the evening gave a list of all the articles sold, the prices paid for them and the names of the purchasers. The accuracy of his memory was in this case attested by the auctioneer's clerk, who followed the recapitulation with his book and found that in no case had the man of wonderful memory made a single mistake.

Manners.

Manners are of more importance than laws. In a great measure the laws depend on them. The law touches us but here and there and now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe. They give their whole color to our lives. According to their quality they aid morals, they supply them or they totally destroy them.—Burke.

A Bad Recollection.

First Barber—Whew! That barn-stormer must be a bad actor! Second Ditto—Why? First Barber—When I asked him if he wanted an egg shampoo he jumped right out of the chair and made for the door!—Detroit Free Press.

Bad Either Way.

Mr. Wiseguy—No, I don't want any of those sausages. I'm afraid of trichina. The Butcher—I assure you there's no danger of trichina in those sausages. Mr. Wiseguy—Well, hydrophobia, then. It's just as bad—Cleveland Leader.

Encouraging.

"Close up, boys; close up!" said a colonel to his regiment. "If the enemy were to fire on you when you are straggling along like that they wouldn't kill a single man of you. Close up!"

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